

Psychiatrist Called Red Spy, Like Brother

By NORMA ABRAMS and HENRY LEE

The psychiatrist brother of confessed Soviet spy Jack Soble was dramatically grabbed by the FBI at Rockland State Hospital in Orangeburg yesterday on charges that for almost two decades—behind a mask of courtly professional propriety—he had conspired to spy on high-level government intelligence and counterintelligence agencies for Russia.

Tall, gaunt and bald, the suspect, who tells his name differently from his brother, was identified as Dr. Robert Soblen, 60, a product of three top universities in Germany and Switzerland, who learned his profession at hospitals in Berlin, Paris and his native Lithuania.

Since 1946, Dr. Soblen has maintained a private practice with offices at 50 W. 72d St. He is a supervising psychiatrist at Rockland State, where he, like his brother, holds a similar post.

Dr. Lawrence Roberts, associate director at Rockland, said Soblen's patients, 12 to 15-year-old boys, liked him, and the psychiatrist was "very normal in his relationships with other doctors." The hospital staff was shaken when the psychiatrist was bagged just as he was leaving for lunch.

"Ever Since 1940"

However, according to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Chief Assistant U. S. Attorney Morton S. Robson here and a secret, sealed indictment which was opened yesterday in Federal Court, the mind man with the elegant Continental manners had been an industrious Soviet spy back ever since 1940.

The indictment charges that he plotted to get documents, photographs and other data, particularly in this area, for transmission to the Soviet Union. He paid special attention, it was related, to the personnel, activities and organization of the Office of Strategic Services and other spy and counter-spy agencies.

Biggest in Years

Dr. Soblen assertedly belonged to a Red spy ring, personally set up by the late Soviet secret police boss Lavrenti P. Beria, which began stealing U.S. secrets a week after Pearl Harbor. The apparatus was described as the biggest exposed in this country since atom spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were arrested—and later electrocuted—almost 11 years ago.

The indictment maintained that



(UPI photo)

Dr. Robert Soblen arrives at U. S. Court House after arrest.

the psychiatrist had dealt with his brother, with Beria, Vassili Zubilin, onetime high Soviet diplomatic aid in Washington and reputed secret police general, and other high-level Russians, both here and in Washington. In

all 18 persons, living and dead, here and snug in Moscow, were named as co-conspirators but not defendants.

Could Mean Death

The indictment contained two conspiracy counts, one carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, plus \$10,000 fine—and the other the possible death penalty because the charged offenses occurred during wartime.

At his arraignment late in the day before Federal Judge William B. Herlands, Robson demanded \$50,000 bail, indicating that there had been serious penetration of OSS security—in which the ring obtained monthly reports on names of employees, sources of information and the nature of documents that passed over OSS desks.

The implication was that OSS informants in Europe were being revealed to the Reds.

A Family Deal, Says U.S.

Robson also told Herlands that the brothers, Soble and Soblen, had struck a spy deal with their Red masters back at the time of Russia's march into Lithuania. In exchange for getting their family safely out of the overrun country, he charged, they agreed to come to the U.S. as spies.

However, counsel for the psychiatrist protested that his client is seriously ill, that he has always been available for questioning by grand juries—and that, while under surveillance for several years, he has several times positively stopped his car so that his shadows could catch up with him when they lost him.

Dr. Soblen pleaded not guilty, and Herlands fixed bail at \$75,000. He set Dec. 20 as the date for placing the case on the trial calendar.

Denounced by Morros

The Russian spy ring was denounced several years ago by master U. S. counter-spy Boris Morros, Hollywood movie director, and Jack Soble was arrested here in January, 1957. With his

wife, Myra, and a third defendant, Jacob Albam, he pleaded guilty. Soble got seven years, his wife four and Albam five.

All three were named co-conspirators in yesterday's indictment, along with various others not named as defendants. Among them were Dr. Henry Spitz, a naturalized citizen who once worked just outside the Sandia Base A-bomb project in New Mexico, and Spitz's wife, Beatrice.

In Vienna, the couple hastily denaturalized themselves when they began to feel the heat of U. S. investigation.

Others On the List

Others listed were Horst Baerensprung, a German now dead, who worked for OSS in wartime; Mrs. Johanna Koener Beker, daughter of an East German government official, who is an employee of the New York law firm of Sherman, Sterling & Wright, and Gen. Zubilin's wife, Elizabeth, who seemed to have belonged to a sort of ladies' auxiliary of the Soviet secret police.

Four other co-conspirators, described as American citizens still in this country, were named as Esther Rand, Sylvia Callen, Lucy Booker and Floyd Miller. Government sources described them as couriers for the ring.

Born Ruvelis Leiba Sobolevicius in Lithuania, the psychiatrist knocked around European universities and hospitals in the '30s, and was in Moscow in early 1941. From there, he assertedly went to Vladivostok and Shanghai, from where he entered the U. S., at San Francisco, the same year.

According to the charges, he met Gen. Zubilin here in 1942, and during the war years, when he assertedly met several of the other conspirators, he got himself a job with UN as a translator and consultant to its Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.